

THE PRINCIPLES OF
ROMAN CATHOLICS AND UNITARIANS
CONTRASTED.
A SERMON;

Written with reference to the charges brought against those who maintain the Doctrine of the DIVINE UNITY in the strictest sense, by Dr. HORSLEY.

Preached on Tuesday, Nov. 5, 1799,

TO A CONGREGATION OF PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,
IN ST. SAVIOURGATE, YORK,

And published at the Request of the Audience.

BY CHARLES WELLBELOVED.

SECOND EDITION.

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THE HISTORY OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BY
J. H. COOPER

IN TWO VOLUMES.
THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON: 1800.

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AND BY THE AUTHOR, IN YORK.

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TO THE

REVEREND FATHERS OF THE
CONGREGATION OF PROTESTANT
MINISTERS, IN THE
CITY OF NEW-YORK.

1800.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Discourse is published in consequence of the request of those who heard it, and the approbation and advice of some judicious friends to whom it has since been shown. Had the subject fallen into other hands, it would no doubt, have been better managed. As it is, the writer is not without hopes that it may contribute in some small degree, at least, to the silencing of those calumnies, and the rectifying of those misrepresentations to which Christians who hold the doctrine of the Divine Unity in its strictest sense, are exposed. For this purpose it was written; and if this purpose be answered by it, the wishes of the writer will be completely gratified. The subject has been before handled, and in an able manner; but not so as to preclude all further attempts to wipe away such gross aspersions, and to clear the character of Unitarians from such foul reproaches as are cast upon them by the late Bishop of St. David's. The matter of the following discourse may to many

be unpleasant ; but the writer hopes, that in the manner nothing will be found offensive. He has cautiously avoided whatever might appear to be a return of railing for railing ; and has been anxious not to violate, in any instance, the Christian rule, nor to betray a spirit of which the Gospel does not approve. To pass by such charges as are brought against the sect to which he esteems it an honour and a privilege to belong, would argue a consciousness of having merited them ; and to repel them by violent and abusive language, would only serve to induce a suspicion that they are well grounded. Unitarians are not persons destitute of feeling—they are not insensible to the value of a good character, and the esteem of their fellow-citizens. If their opinions be proved to be false, they are willing to retract them ; but they cannot readily, and in silence submit to the injustice of being charged with views and intentions as the pure result of their opinions, which can never be shown to belong to them. Hence the origin of the following Discourse, which is now submitted to the candour of those who shall peruse it.

A SERMON, &c.

LUKE vi. 43.

A GOOD TREE BRINGETH NOT FORTH CORRUPT FRUIT,
NEITHER DOTH A CORRUPT TREE BRING FORTH GOOD
FRUIT.

WE are met together, my friends, according to our usual custom, upon the anniversary of an event, which, by the jealousy it excited against the principles of the Romish Church, has conduced in no small degree to secure to us those civil and religious privileges we now enjoy. We are also met together upon the day succeeding the anniversary of another great event, of a similar tendency, the landing of King William III. which, by causing the right of succession to the throne of these realms to devolve solely upon Protestant Princes, has essentially contributed to our preservation from the tyranny and oppression under which our forefathers groaned. It is my custom, as you well know, upon these occasions, to lead your minds to some reflections suitable to one or other of these events ;—and it has appeared to me that I cannot employ the

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present hour to greater advantage, nor more agreeably to the nature of our present meeting, than in attempting to vindicate the principles we maintain, and the conduct we exhibit, from the charges which have been laid against them by persons of little candour, but of some name and influence in the world, especially since in decrying our principles, they have thought it necessary to speak with great tenderness, if not with approbation of those which we are this day taught to regard with a degree of horror ;—and against which, till of late years, there always existed a well-grounded fear and caution in the minds of British Protestants.

Among all the other extraordinary characters, however, which mark this eventful period, we see that it has become somewhat fashionable to show a more than Christian moderation towards the doctrines and ceremonies of the Romish Church, to affect an unbounded charity towards those who maintain and propagate them, and to glory in calling her ministers brethren. An inclination towards Popery in this country, has been suspected by some very eminent persons in the Established Church for some years past':—Of late, however, if I am not mistaken, it has been shown more openly. In the course of the last year, a Protestant Bishop, in one of the great councils of a Protestant nation, solemnly declared it to be his opinion, "*that if there was any defect in the ecclesiastical establishment of this country, it was in the want of religious forms to arrest the attention, and seize upon the imagination* of

' See Mr. Archdeacon Blackburne's Works, particularly his Life of Mr. Hollis.

of the People” In the opinion of many sober-minded persons, the forms and ceremonies of the Established Church favour too much of Popery: to them it appears, that in her worship she uses too much pomp and parade; that the imagination is already too much, and the heart too little affected; and that it would be more for the interests of true religion, if all the relics of Popery in her Service were abolished, and her practice brought nearer to the primitive simplicity of the Gospel. The language surely must be stronger than the speaker intended,—it cannot be his wish to restore the puerile parade of the Altar Service,—the gaudy garments of the Priests,—the devotion at the images of departed saints,—and all that solemn trifling which engenders superstition, weakens the human intellect, and excites unworthy apprehensions of the Supreme Being.

There is indeed reason to suspect that the sentiments and usages of this corrupt Church, are not treated with so much favour, merely for their own sake; but that they are brought forward in this public and energetic manner, in order to disparage *our* religious opinions and practices, and to persuade our countrymen, that whatever danger they may have formerly apprehended from the principles of Popery, those of the Divine Unity, in the strict sense in which we maintain them, are far more to be dreaded. The Prelate, whose words I have already quoted, in a circular letter, written to the Clergy of his diocese, requiring them publicly to recommend the case of the emigrant Priests, uses the following extraordinary language: “You will remind them (i. e. your respective congregations) that the persons for

whom we, in the name of God, implore aid, however they may differ from us in certain points of doctrine, discipline, and external rites, are nevertheless our brethren, members of Christ, children of God, heirs of the promises; adhering, indeed, to the communion of the Church of Rome, in which they have been educated; but more endeared to us by the example they exhibit of patient suffering for conscience sake, than estranged by what we deem their errors and corruptions. More near and dear to us in truth by far than some, (meaning Unitarians) who, affecting to be called our Protestant brethren, have no other title to the name of Protestants, than a Jew or a Pagan; who, not being a Christian, is for that reason only not a Papist; persons who, professing to receive our Lord as a teacher, as the very Mahometans receive him, call in question, however, what is not called in question by the Mahometans, the infallibility of his doctrine; and under the mark of an affected zeal for civil and religious liberty, are endeavouring to propagate in this country those very notions of the sovereignty of the people, the rights of man, and an unlimited right of private judgment, in opposition to ecclesiastical discipline, those treasonable and Atheistic notions, which, in France, have wrought the total subversion of the civil and ecclesiastical constitution; the confusion of all rights; the abolition of all property; the extinction of all religion, and the loss of all liberty to the individual, except that of blaspheming God, and reviling kings."

It is painful, my friends, to be obliged to bring before you such intemperate language, and to exhibit such melancholy effects of bigotry upon the
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mind and temper. Such, however, justly as it may surprize you, is the language too commonly held concerning us and our principles ; and I have quoted this passage, because it concentrates and embodies the sentiments, which are known to be maintained by many, concerning the professors of the Unitarian doctrine. It certainly appears out of its proper place, in a letter recommending charity and the exercise of brotherly affection ; and it paints our character and motives in colours as false as they are glaring. There is nothing in our doctrine, or in our conduct, as I hope more fully to show, that will sanction the classing of us with Atheists, levelers, and regicides : there is nothing in either, to merit the singular harshness with which we are here and elsewhere treated. But every candid person, will perceive that it is mere declamation, unsubstantiated by one proof : with every candid person, therefore, it will have no effect ; and if such language were addressed to none but the sober minded, we should have no cause for uneasiness, nor find it necessary to vindicate ourselves from such heavy charges. But it is ever the case that abuse is made to supply the want of argument, and the opinions which cannot be brought into discredit by fair reasoning, are generally loaded with terms of reproach, and held up as objects of terror. It is much easier to rail than to argue, to vilify than to disprove ; and the minds of the multitude are more influenced by intemperate language, than by dispassionate reasoning : but this conduct is not fair nor decent ; it ill accords with the character of a Christian Bishop, and is perfectly hostile to the spirit of the Gospel.

The professors of Popery are considered by this prelate and others as nearer, and therefore dearer to the Established Church of this Country, than Unitarians. We readily admit that no reformed church is so widely separated from the Roman Catholic as we are ; but we consider this as neither a matter of wonder, nor a fit subject for reproach. It renders us neither worse men, nor less virtuous and peaceable citizens :—It has arisen naturally and unavoidably from our situation ; and the most bigotted defender of the established doctrines, had he been exposed to the same influences, would have possessed the same character. Unfettered by creeds and subscriptions, we have endeavoured to use the various helps which the increasing light and knowledge of modern times afford : We have brought the principles which our ancestors believed, to a more rigid scrutiny than they had the means of instituting ; by this process, we have discovered the extraneous matter, which, in past ages, has been added to the Christian doctrine, and we have embraced what appears to us the primitive faith of the Gospel. While the Church of England has remained in very nearly the same state in which she left Popery, and made comparatively little alteration in her doctrine and discipline, which were necessarily suited to the minds of men just emerging from darkness, and, therefore, incapable of bearing the full blaze of truth², we have endeavoured to keep pace with the

² “ It was the principle of Cranmer to proceed in the glorious work of reform with moderation ; he cautiously avoided the rejection of too much at once of what the people had been accustomed to consider

the spirit of improvement, and availed ourselves of the numerous aids afforded by the discovery of manuscripts, and the investigations of learned men, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the Scriptures.

sider as parts of religion; not merely to prevent public commotions, but in order to procure a gradual change in their opinions, rather than give a shock to their faith." *Elements of Christian Theology*, by the Bp. of Lincoln, Vol. II. p. 22. "It is generally believed that Cranmer and Ridley were chiefly concerned in penning the Forty-two Articles, upon which our Thirty-nine are founded." *Ib.* p. 35.

From the history of the Liturgy, contained in the same work, we learn some curious particulars, which I shall take the liberty of producing, in order to justify what I have advanced above.

"In the Liturgy of Queen Elizabeth, several alterations were made in the Communion Service, and in the Rubric, with a view to conciliate the Roman Catholics. This comprehensive plan, added to the Queen's apparent attachment to usages, that had obtained under the ancient establishment, induced many of the Roman Catholics to continue to join in the communion of the Established Church. Even the Pope was ready to give his sanction to the Liturgy, and to assent to the use of the Communion in both kinds, provided the Queen would acknowledge his supremacy; and it was not till after a conformity of more than ten years, that the Roman Catholics withdrew to separate congregations." *Elements, &c.* Vol. II. p. 25.

The alterations which were afterwards made, do not appear to be of such a nature as to change the spirit of the Liturgy. The Hampton-Court conference, ended, as might have been expected, without producing any thing. But soon after this, "In the Morning and Evening Prayers a Collect, and in the Litany a particular intercession, were appointed for the Royal Family; the Forms of Thanksgiving, upon several occasions, were then added; the questions and answers concerning the Sacraments were subjoined to the Catechism; and the administration of private baptism, were, by the Rubric, expressly confined to the lawful minister. These, and some other additions and improvements, were made by the authority of James I. and universally adopted, although they were not ratified by Parliament." *Ib.* p. 26.

The alterations made by Charles I. were few and unimportant; and in the reign of Charles II. the Savoy Conference broke up without affecting any change. The Episcopal Commissioners then took

tures. Genuine religion, indeed, cannot be altered nor improved. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." No progress which the world can make in civilization and knowledge, can justify

the business upon themselves; and the following additions and alterations, according to the Bishop of Lincoln, were agreed to; "The Collects for the Ember Weeks; the Prayer for the High Court of Parliament; the Prayer for all sorts and conditions of men; the General Thanksgiving; the Collect for Easter Eve; the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the sixth Sunday after Epiphany; a new Collect for the third Sunday in Advent; the Office of Baptism for those of riper years; the two Psalms prefixed to the Lesson in the Burial Service; the Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea; for the martyrdom of Charles I. and the Restoration of the Royal Family, were all added. There were also several other less material additions: and, through the whole service, ambiguities were removed, and various improvements were made; and in particular, the portions of the Epistles and Gospels were taken from the new translation of the Bible; but the Psalms, according to the translation of Cranmer's Bible, were retained. The book, in this state, passed both Houses of Convocation; it was subscribed by the Bishops and Clergy; it was ratified by Act of Parliament, and received the Royal assent, May 17, 1662. This was the last revival of the Book of Common Prayer, in which any alteration was made by public authority." *Elem. Vol. II. p. 27.*

If Dr. Pretyman be accurate in this statement, and there is no reason to doubt he is, it is plain that no alterations have been made in the Morning and Evening Services, materially changing them, since the reign of Elizabeth; when the Catholics could conscientiously join in the devotions of the Church of England. This is a curious fact, and justifies the view which is given in this Sermon, of the unreformed state of what is called the purest of the reformed churches.

I never have been able to assent to the praises usually lavished upon the Book of Common Prayer. The injudicious selection of portions of Scripture; the multiplicity of short prayers, and the variety of postures, enjoined by the Rubric, do not to my mind present that idea of perfection, which some have discovered, in the Services of the Church. Particular parts of it may be apposite, of a beautiful and expressive simplicity; as a whole it is not, I think, at all comparable with the Liturgies in use among some of our societies; particularly that which is generally known by the name of the Liverpool Liturgy; the joint production of three Unitarian ministers. And, I think, the judgment of impartial men is on my side.

justify any innovations in the doctrine which the founder of Christianity delivered; but, as during the course of so many centuries, this must, of necessity, be blended with the inventions of men, and obscured by sentiments and practices arising from the darkness and ignorance in which the human mind has been involved; it becomes the duty of those who profess to believe the Gospel, to endeavour to discover what bears not the authority of its first Great Teacher, and to restore the doctrine to its primitive purity. Upon this principle the Reformers acted; upon this principle the reformed churches were professedly established; and in justice we deserve their approbation, their thanks, and their imitation, rather than the reproach which is cast upon us. The Reformers used all the light and knowledge they enjoyed in detecting the errors of Papal usurpation; but as they could not possibly detect, or detecting, reform them all, they left an example to those who should come after them, in circumstances more favourable to the discovery and spread of truth. This glorious example it is our endeavour and our pride to follow. Early and long associations; the peculiar habits and manners of the times; the necessity of great caution in introducing novel sentiments, were hindrances in the way of these friends and benefactors of human kind, which time hath removed; they no longer oppose us in our search after truth, or in our open avowal of it. Hence it is, that we have advanced so far beyond where they were under the necessity of stopping, and have approached, as we think, so much nearer to the original simplicity of the gospel verity. There is surely nothing in this which can justly expose us to reproach, bring any imputation upon our judgment,

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or fix any stain upon our character, moral or political. Removed to the distance, at which we acknowledge we stand, from the doctrines of the Established Church; we may be, and I trust we are, in general, persons of a sober understanding; of morals, not less pure than our neighbours; of piety, not less genuine and ardent, and peaceable, and well-disposed members of the community to which we belong. We may, I think, safely venture to assert, that had the Reformers lived nearer to our own times, in the enjoyment of advantages similar to those we possess; they would have removed the reformed churches to a much greater distance from the Church of Rome, and rendered the distinction much less than it is between their doctrines and the genuine faith of the Gospel³.

But it is time to leave the particular examination of this extraordinary passage, and to enter upon that part of the subject, to which I wish principally to draw your attention. I should not have brought it to your recollection at this distance of time, had it not afforded a perfect specimen of the sentiments which are still held of our faith and practice. You see then, that the doctrines of the Romish Church are considered as more truly Christian, and their influence far less injurious than those of Unitarianism. Our religious

³ The judgment of an able Roman Catholic writer upon this subject, is curious and worthy of remark. "Of this I am convinced, that were certain obstacles removed, such as the views of interest; the animosity of party; the blindness of prejudice, and those thick clouds which controversy has raised, it would then appear that the Protestant Church of England and Catholics, are divided by very thin partitions." Berrington's State and Behaviour of English Catholics, p. 148.

ligious principles are declared to be worse than those of Mahomet, and our conduct as vile as that of the most abandoned of men. As by this prelate, so in common, we are charged with hypocrisy in our sentiments and conduct. Our piety is a pretence,—our benevolence is insidious,—our religion is a cloak for Atheism,—we are the corrupters of youth, the enemies of social order, hostile to the peace and welfare of our country, revilers of our king, and blasphemers of God. Such are the consequences charged upon the doctrines of Unitarianism; and if the charge could be supported, the errors of the Church of Rome, gross as they are, might well be preferred; but a due acquaintance with our principles and ourselves, will prove it groundless.

This representation of our principles and conduct, in which Popery is so warmly preferred, requires that I should bring into a comparison, I trust, somewhat more fair and agreeable to truth, the opinions and practices of each party. This, while it agrees with the occasion of our present meeting, will, at the same time, serve to exhibit our faith and practice to some advantage, and to repel the injuries which are cast against them. In pursuing this comparison, I wish to be understood, that I have principally in view the doctrines of Popery and their tendencies, not as they are professed in England, but in those countries which are called Catholic. In the words before quoted, we are not contrasted with British Catholics; but with persons who have not by their intercourse with Englishmen, and by habits acquired in a land of freedom, lost as our Catholic countrymen have, much of what is offensive, and all that is politically alarming in the doctrines of the Romish Church

Church. No one rejoices more sincerely than myself in any appearance of a more candid spirit towards this class of our own community:—no one can be more desirous of seeing them in the enjoyment of all the privileges, which, as members of this community, they ought to possess:—no one can be more unwilling to revive prejudice or fears, which good sense and candour have allayed. With these I have comparatively little to do. We are contrasted with emigrant clergy, with men, who, for the most part, hold the genuine doctrines of the Romish Church, and who are exposed to much of their baneful influence. These are the doctrines and practices of which I now speak, and of the existence of which there are numerous proofs.

In common with most other Christians of modern times, the members of the Roman Catholic Church believe that three persons make one God; that one person of this mysterious Godhead left his exalted station, condescended to be born of a Jewish woman,—to pass through the helpless state of infancy,—to live in poverty amongst his own works,—to be despised and insulted by his own creatures, and to be put to death by those very hands which he himself had made. They assert that, by his death, he appeased the anger of one person who had no more reason to be angry than the other two, and bought off a very small portion of mankind from the great enemy of God and man, to whom they had been sold by the sin of the first man, by him to be endlessly tormented. In addition to this faith, which the reformed churches have unhappily retained, they regard the mother of Jesus as deserving of peculiar veneration; call her by the absurd and blasphemous

phemous title of Mother of God, and invoke her, with the utmost devotion, in their public and private prayers. They reverence in a manner which approaches very nearly to religious worship, if indeed it do not possess that character, the spirits of certain departed men, whom they call Saints; some of whom, during their lives, were distinguished only by their superstition, ignorance, or vices; and not by those virtues which are the true ornaments of the human character. They believe, also, that the souls of men, upon leaving the body, are placed in a state in which they are gradually freed from all their imperfections, and that the prayers of the living are of avail to shorten the period of their abode in that state. They maintain that the bread and wine, which are used as the symbols of the body and blood of Christ, after the benediction of the priest, are miraculously changed into the very body and blood of our Lord, lose all their symbolical nature, and become the reality and the substance. They enjoin penance, call it a sacrament, and regard it as a means of procuring the pardon of sin. They acknowledge the authority of one class of men amongst them to absolve from sin; and some have even imagined, that for a certain stated recompense, the pardon of any specific crime may be obtained. Their worship is degraded by idle parade and unmeaning pomp, designed, principally, to affect the imagination, and consisting chiefly of the repetition of rhapsodies addressed to Jesus, to the Mother of Jesus, and to the saints. God, to whom alone worship is due, is not the sole object of their adoration: this is paid by a numerous sect amongst them, to the five wounds of Jesus, one prayer being offered to each, to the heart of Jesus
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and the heart of Mary⁴. Is not this a corrupt tree? Are not these principles and practices indications of the perversion of the human intellect? Are they not contrary to the spirit and letter of the Gospel, derogatory from the honour of God, and unfriendly to true piety? How then will truth and candour justify the preference of these to our religious faith? How can any who judge soberly, and decide with fairness, recommend those as more congenial with true Christianity, than those by which we are distinguished? Observe the contrast:

As Unitarians we acknowledge one God, who in Scripture is called the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Maker of all worlds, and the Governor and Judge of all men. We consider Jesus as his prophet, commissioned to teach mankind, in his name, the doctrine of eternal life, and to exemplify this doctrine in his own person, by rising from the grave. We are not agreed respecting his person; some amongst us considering him as the true and proper son of Joseph and Mary, and others believing him to have been miraculously produced. With the highest notions we conceive of him, however, he is still, in our view, the creature of God, and obedient to his will. We do not believe it possible that the God of mercy, the kind Father of the human race, should want such an inducement to be gracious to his creatures, as the death and suffering of an innocent person. According to the Scripture phraseology, we consider the life and death of Christ, as having the same object in view, not to reconcile
God

⁴ See the Note at the end of this Discourse.

God to men ; but men to God, by engaging them to love and serve the great origin of all perfection, the inexhaustible source of goodness and mercy. In the natural and moral evil which abounds in the world, we discover the provision of a wise and merciful Creator, for the production of the final greatest possible sum of happiness. Whatever character we individually sustain, it is formed by the events of our lives, and the circumstances of our condition. We consider ourselves as coming pure from the hands of God, and continuing so, till corrupted by the evil practices of the world. The doctrine of original depravity appears to us not to have any countenance from Scripture. We conceive it contrary to reason, and the express language of revelation, to place any hope in the righteousness of another, as a substitute for our own, or as necessary to procure for us the favour of God. It appears to us, that Almighty God has determined, that a life of obedience to his will, so far as we can discover it, as it uniformly produces happiness here, shall also entitle us to happiness hereafter. We look for this future happiness, not on account of any merits of our own. We trust, that in this respect, we feel as sincerely humble as any of our fellow Christians, as any even of the most penitent sons of the Romish Church. We know that we are the children of frailty ; and that were God strict to mark our follies, and severe to punish our transgressions, no flesh living could be justified. We trust entirely in that mercy which he has revealed to mankind by Jesus Christ :—we lay no claims upon him for his favour, but repose our hopes upon that goodness which we are assured endureth for ever ;

ever; and, which we trust, from the encouragements afforded by Scripture, will not suffer any sincerely virtuous endeavours to go unrewarded. If I conceive rightly of our sentiments, they tend less than any others to engender spiritual pride and vain confidence; on the contrary, they produce an entire dependence upon God, and great humbleness of mind. With respect to the doctrine of Christ, and the authority of Scripture, in our reverence of whatever can be really influential, we come, not, I believe, behind any of our brethren. That the words which Jesus spake were the Father's words, and that every part of the doctrine which he delivered has claims on our attention, which we cannot refuse to admit, form essential articles in our Creed. In every thing relating to the subject of his mission, we regard him as infallible, and we feel for his character all the respect and veneration which so much wisdom and goodness naturally excite. If we do not pay him divine honours, it is because he does not appear to us to have demanded them. If he be not the object of our worship, it is because he himself hath set us an example of worshipping the Father only; and is represented in Scripture, the authority of which we dare not question, as our brother, and equally, with ourselves, the dependent creature of God. Upon the subject of the inspiration of the Scriptures, as we have no Articles nor Creeds to shackle our inquiries, our faith is not uniform; but we feel no hesitation in acknowledging, with the apostle, that all Scripture which is given by inspiration is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; but we cannot discover the marks, nor indeed the necessity

of that plenary inspiration for which others so strenuously contend. This position appears to us untenable, and in its effects injurious to the cause of the Gospel. We take the Scriptures as our guide, admit nothing into our Creed which they contradict; study them as alone containing the words of sound doctrine, and endeavour to form our temper and conduct by the wise and momentous precepts they deliver. These are our leading sentiments, and the mode of our worship is agreeable to the simplicity by which they are distinguished. We avoid every thing that has the appearance of senseless pomp and parade; we wish the passions to be affected no more than may conduce to the stronger impression of useful truths upon the mind, and the heightening of that devotion, which, in the best of us is, in this imperfect state, too apt to languish. In our mode of worship, as in our Creed, we are not perfectly uniform; different societies observe different methods,—and errors, we acknowledge, may belong to every mode we practise; but the first endeavour of all is to imitate the simplicity of the primitive Christian plan; and, we think, we are not wholly unsuccessful. May we not with reason look upon these sentiments and practices as “a good tree, which cannot produce corrupt fruit:” Are they not honourable to the character of God, and by their perfect freedom from every thing which tends to produce a blind credulity, and superstition, favourable to the mental and moral improvement of man? Maintaining these, how can we be unworthy of the name of Protestants and of Christians. If any abjure the errors of Popery, surely we are of that number. If any possess the essentials of the Christ-

stian character, I trust we do. We believe most firmly in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are not, we hope, deficient in those qualities which are required in his disciples. We can see no ground of reproach in any of these opinions which we conscientiously maintain; they are neither irrational, nor contrary to Scripture; they discover no defect either in our judgment or the good qualities of the heart. We must therefore continue to maintain them, though our name should every where be cast out as evil, and console ourselves with the expectation of that blessed state where error shall be removed from the faith of all parties, and no evil passions shall come to interrupt the harmony and good will that shall prevail amongst all the wise and virtuous of every nation and of every sect under heaven.

But that very circumstance which we consider as one of the strongest recommendations of our principles, forms a principal part of the charge commonly exhibited against us. We are censured for paying too much regard in our religious inquiries to reason. Too proud to receive those doctrines of the Gospel which we cannot understand, we reject, without hesitation, the inspired words of Christ and his Apostles, if they be not level with our groveling intellect. In opposition to the Great Ruler of heaven and earth, we select from his word what we please to believe; and dare to dictate to him the revelation he ought to make of his will. Compelled in every object around us to acknowledge some part of its constitution above our comprehension, in religion alone we object to mystery: Thus is our conduct frequently represented. In the term *rational Christians*, therefore is involved the severest
censure;

censure; nothing less, in fact, than an absolute denial of our right to the name of Christians. No assertions, however, can be more unfounded than these. We do not exalt reason above revelation, nor do we bring down revelation to the level of our imperfect intellect;—we reject none of the doctrines of inspiration;—we refuse not to listen to any of the words which the Lord our God hath spoken. Our faith is rational, because, after the most serious examination, we see nothing in revelation contradictory to reason—we find no doctrine in the Scriptures above the comprehension of the human mind; we meet with none of the words of God relating to religious faith or practice, which we cannot understand, and which we do not endeavour to obey^s. Our reason we consider as the distinguishing gift of God to man, and are perfectly assured that he can have proposed no article of faith which contradicts its voice,

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^s There is no doctrine of the Scriptures, according to our judgment, which is not founded upon argument or testimony. We are required to believe in the existence of God; but although the nature of this great being is far beyond our comprehension, his existence is readily admitted, because “his eternal power and Godhead, when considered in his works, are clearly manifest ever since the creation of the world.” It is the leading article of the Christian faith, that after death we shall live again; but when the Apostles preached this doctrine, they testified the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, and encouraged their hearers to deduce from this, arguments for their own future restoration to life. Scripture does not propose, as an article of faith, the manner of our recovery from death, nor the nature of our future powers and employments, because Divine Wisdom knew these to be above the comprehension of the human mind. In every other instance it is the same. All that we are required to believe, we can understand; and what we know not now, as far as will be possible or beneficial, we are assured we shall know hereafter.

and prohibits its exertion. We do not arm our reason against God, we only make it our defence against the errors of fallible men. For this very purpose, among others, is it given, to keep us in the pure faith of the Gospel, and to enable us to detect all the inventions which human weakness or wickedness have represented as the doctrines of Heaven. In other concerns the guidance of reason is safe; we therefore trust implicitly to its direction in the important affair of religion: these mutually aid each other. Revelation has discovered what reason never could teach; and reason sanctions these discoveries, and requires of us, that we receive them with attention and gratitude,

It must appear extraordinary, after what I have just observed, that any of our Christian brethren should be offended by our calling ourselves *rational Christians*. It might have been justly expected that they would permit us to use in peace that term which they frequently employ, in order to cast reproach upon us⁶. The contrary, however, is the fact; and they are angry because we assume a title, which we
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⁶ Mr. Fuller, in his Examination of the Calvinistic and Socinian Systems, adduces our regard for reason as an instance of the near relation which our principles bear to Deism. A rational Christian, with him, is no Christian at all. In mentioning this work, which has obtained a degree of credit and authority, to which it is by no means entitled, it is impossible not to recommend to the impartial inquirer, the careful perusal of two Tracts, by the Rev. J. Kentish; the one, a Discourse entitled "The Moral tendency of the genuine Christian Doctrine, written with reference to Mr. Fuller's Examination," &c. and the other, "Strictures upon Mr. Fuller's Reply." Fair reasoning, good sense, and candour, eminently distinguish these publications from those by which they were occasioned.

are censured for deservng. Affectng to hold human reason in contempt, they claim an equal right to be called rational, and complain that we usurp the very character which they at the same time both censure in us, and vindicate to themselves. How strangely inconsistent!—But why should we give offence? We do not mean to say or to insinuate that all reason, even in religion, is confined to ourselves. We do not mean to avow that we consider those who do not believe as we do, on every subject of their faith irrational: we mean no more than that we do not, like many other Christians, glory in the belief of doctrines “at which reason stands aghast, and faith herself is half confounded;” nor maintain that faith becomes more meritorious and efficacious, as the doctrines are further removed from the comprehension of the human mind; but that we admit no article into our Creed, which reason does not sanction, which appears to us not the truth of God, but the fabrication of erring men. We use it not as a proud title;—we take no more credit to ourselves for being rational Christians, than for being rational creatures: in both respects, we are what God hath made us. Our faith, whatever it be, has resulted from our circumstances; and, we humbly thank God, for having placed us in such as have led us to form those conceptions of himself and his government, which afford us so much consolation, contribute so much to our happiness here, and which, we trust, by their influence on our temper and conduct, will prepare us for more complete happiness hereafter.

When the principles of Unitarians and Roman

Catholics are thus compared, and, I trust, it has been done with fairness, our astonishment is naturally and unavoidably excited, that there should be any so completely under the influence of bigotry as to prefer the latter. It is no other than the preference of error and absurdity to truth and reason. We will now consider the probable influence of these different principles.

The history of Christendom, if I mistake not, discovers in every page, the evil tendencies of Papal superstition, and affords a perfect illustration of our Lord's declaration in the text, "that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." Where can we meet with such a recital of spiritual tyranny, exorbitant ambition, and depraved morals, frequently exhibited in the Pontiff himself, from him descending in a stream through the great body of the Ecclesiastics, and through them, corrupting the Laity? In what sect of Christians do we meet with so much of the profession, and so little of the spirit of the Gospel? What do the vallies of Piedmont—what do the cities and towns of France depose concerning the influence of the doctrines of Popery? What do the Waldenses—what do the Hugonots witness? Is their voice in its favour? Do they bear testimony to its heavenly origin? From them do we learn that it breathes "peace on earth, and good-will toward men?" In our own country what language does Smithfield utter—what does this day prove concerning the tendencies of the doctrines of the Church of Rome? Here surely there can be but one sentiment; and all, whatever partiality they may avow for these doctrines, must allow that the leading features of Papal Religion have, hitherto, been
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intolerance and persecution⁷. Or are these doctrines favourable to the human mind?—do they not foster ignorance and a debasing superstition?—do they not tend to destroy all liberal and generous sentiment, and to reduce the human understanding to a state of the most abject slavery? What true Catholic dares, in the most important concerns, to think for himself? Or are the practices and usages of this Church such as are best adapted to improve the heart, and regulate the conduct? The celibacy of the Clergy leads to vice in themselves, and the most extensive corruption of morals: the practice of confession affords too many opportunities for the triumph of craft and hypocrisy, over unsuspecting innocence and virtue⁸: the Sacrament of Penance has a tendency

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⁷ To be intolerant, says Mr. Berrington, is a leading maxim of every established church, whether it have its seat in England or in France, in Hindostan or in China. It is now time to correct our abuses, and not seek excuses for our own, from the example of others. All are equally censurable; and when English Protestants arraign so severely the intolerance of Rome, they only mark out more pointedly the injustice of their own conduct." Page 140.

There is certainly too much truth in these remarks. But what is there in the most intolerant of reformed churches to be compared with the Inquisition? What page of their history unfolds a scene at all similar to the massacre of the Hugonots? except in Pagan Rome, during the early period of the Christian æra, where do we meet with any resemblance of Papal Rome?

⁸ "The influence which Priests have it in their power still to acquire from the use of confession, it must be allowed, is very great. Take but once fast hold of a man's conscience, and you may lead him where you please. It is therefore in our church a concern of the greatest moment, that priests be well instructed, and that they be good men." Berrington, p. 165.

Are the Priests uniformly good men? Are the persons to whom such extensive power and influence falls, always such as are capable or desirous of using it properly?

dency to encourage men in a course of evil doing; and the importance which is affixed to the mere ceremonies and parade of worship, lessens the value and necessity of good conduct, and affords an easy substitute for a virtuous life. The evil effects of these corrupt doctrines unhappily are not confined to those who receive them; they are amongst the most powerful, the most constant, and the most extensively operating causes of infidelity. Held up as the genuine doctrines of the Gospel to those who have neither leisure nor inclination to examine them, they cause the mind to revolt at revelation, and impel it into unbelief and Atheism:—This is a position which cannot be denied nor disputed. In all the Catholic countries abroad, infidelity has long pervaded every class of people; and in France, particularly, has spread to a most alarming and melancholy degree; operating, I have no doubt, to the production of many of the calamities under which that unhappy country has been groaning.

Far be it from me to assert, or to insinuate, that the evil influences of these doctrines may be seen in every individual who embraces them. I have too high a regard to truth and candour, to bring all Catholics under so serious and heavy an imputation. I know the influence of circumstances, and the tendencies of principles implanted by our benevolent Creator in our frame too well, to doubt that many escape the pollution of these doctrines, and exhibit a character and conduct which would do honour to any profession, and are a credit to the name of Jesus. Some I know, foreigners, as well

as natives of this soil—and, knowing, respect them highly for their benevolence, their candour, and their integrity; but they owe their virtues, not to their religious sentiments or usages, but to those principles which their religion has not been able to eradicate or corrupt, and to the operation of that part of their doctrine, which is common to all Christians, the expectation of a future life. Much as I respect these individuals, I must ever regard their religious principles in the light in which history and reason place them, contradictory to the plain dictates of revelation, derogatory from the honour of God, and unfriendly to the dignity, the virtue, and the happiness of man.

As to the influence of the Unitarian doctrine upon the temper and conduct, there is one respect in which it cannot well be compared with the principles of the Romish Church. It has never yet been protected by the civil power,—it has never yet been in possession of the sword. Were its popularity and power to be increased to any degree short of an established religion, I feel no doubt concerning the result. Its professors might grow indifferent, their zeal might be lost, but they would never become persecutors. A spirit of persecution in them, must arise from a total dereliction of principle. The progress and authority of their doctrine must be the work of reason alone. Highly as they value their principles, they do not consider them as essential to eternal salvation; they therefore want that strong incentive to intolerance, which all other religious sects possess.

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Whatever the bigotted, and the uncandid supporter of popular doctrines may assert, there is surely nothing in our principles unfriendly to virtue ; but, on the contrary, every thing to excite us to make our calling and election, our happiness in a future world, sure by good works. We have no hope but in the mercy of God ; and we are well assured that his favour will be shown only to the upright. As we conceive a virtuous conduct to be our only title to that mercy, and the blessedness of a future world, we must not sleep as do others, we must watch and be sober. We trust not in the righteousness of another instead of our own, and we look for an exceedingly great reward, solely as the consequence of obedience to the will of God. We aim at an immortal prize ; but we know it will be given to those only who conquer the world, and escape all its polluting influences. As far as our moral character is concerned, we are not always without the esteem of our Christian brethren. Many of them acknowledge that by our benevolence, and by the habitual discharge of the social and relative duties, we should do honour to what they esteem a better cause. In this we do no more than submit to the genuine influence of our principles, and prove that a good tree must produce good fruit : And, as to our religious character, if our piety be not ardent,—if our faith and hope be not strong,—if our confidence in Divine Providence be not a never-failing source of consolation, it is not owing to any defect in our principles, but to the want of due attention to them : For these exhibit God in the most favourable character, recommend him to our warmest love and confidence, and encourage us in the practice of
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that habitual devotion, which must shed the most salutary influences over the whole of our temper and conduct. That we do not always exhibit these genuine effects of Unitarian principles, is certainly to be lamented; but ought not, in justice, to be considered as a proof of the evil tendency of our doctrine⁹.

It militates in no respect whatever against our principles, that there are amongst us those who profess them, without feeling their influence. In all religious sects there are persons of the same character; and were we to deduce inferences from their conduct, no system of doctrine now maintained would appear deserving of our regard. Many amongst us are persons of an inquisitive turn of mind, who, from indifferent churchmen, have become through the force of truth, Unitarians, and have brought their indifference with them. They have embraced this doctrine as they would any speculative truth, and having never been in the habit of reducing their faith to practice, they continue what they were,—men of the world. Others are Unitarians because their fathers were so before them; the word of truth in them, not having any deeper root, is easily choked by the cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and so bringeth no fruit to perfection: so it is in all other denominations of Christians. But we can reckon in our number those,
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⁹ Let the most bigotted opposer of our principles read, with care, two Sermons, published by Dr. Priestley; the one, on "*the Duty of not living to Ourselves*;" and the other, on "*Habitual Devotion*;" and he will rise, if I am not much mistaken, not only with a more candid spirit, but with his heart, in every other respect, greatly improved.

and many of them too, who, having received the doctrine in an honest and good mind, from conviction not only of its truth, but of its superior practical tendency, keep it and bring forth fruit with perseverance¹⁰. *Luke* viii. 14.

The Bishop of Rochester, you perceive, will not allow us so much of Christianity as the Mabometans possess; and another, equally uncandid and more popular writer, calls Unitarianism, in a manner somewhat cant and vulgar, "*the half-way house to Deism*," by which he means infidelity. In the earliest, the Apostolic age of the Gospel, that man was a Christian, who believed in his heart that Jesus was the Christ, and confessed this faith openly to the glory of God the Father, *Rom* x. 9. *Phil* ii. 11. Whatever, therefore, modern teachers of the Gospel may assert concerning us, and our pretensions to the character of disciples of Christ, we have the testimony of the Apostles in our favour, and in this testimony we have reason to rejoice. We believe with our whole hearts that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and we are not backward to profess our faith with all boldness and zeal,—with more zeal and boldness indeed than some, who will not allow us the honourable name of Christians. That some have gone out from us, cannot be denied; that Unitarians have become unbelievers, is a fact too noto-

¹⁰ Unitarianism has, in several instances, been embraced by persons of a deeply religious character, whose lives had been long before under the influence of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, mixed as they were with its corruptions. Their conduct deposes much in its favour.—They are in no respect more conformed to the world.—They are still a peculiar people, but more and more zealous of good works.

notorious to be disputed : but what sect is there existing, from which of late there have not been numberless similar defections ? The charge lies against all parties, and, consequently, has no force as applied to us alone. We are as far, and as it appears to me much farther removed from infidelity, than they are who profess a corrupt Christianity ; and it can be owing only to that infatuation, which Almighty God is now permitting to operate upon the minds of men, in order eventually to produce some important change in the religious world, that any who have once enjoyed the light of the primitive Christian doctrine should choose to wander in the oppressive gloom of Infidelity and Atheism. This infatuation has seized men indiscriminately, and all the different sects of Christianity have to lament its diffusion.

But in imputing the encouragement of Infidelity to the Unitarian doctrine, the services which Unitarians have rendered to the Gospel of Christ, are surely either forgotten or wilfully overlooked. In the honourable list of those who have most ably defended the important cause of Christianity, are to be found the names of Foster, Lardner, and Priestley, who, at the same time, must be ranked amongst the most zealous and active supporters of the genuine Scripture doctrine of the Divine Unity. Must we doubt the sincerity of these and other Unitarian writers, who have so successfully endeavoured to counteract the effects of Infidelity ? Or are we to suppose that they were ignorant of the nature and tendency of their principles ? If not, how can these principles have any affinity to unbelief, or afford it any encouragement ?

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I must detain you a few moments longer, while I endeavour to refute a more insidious, and an equally unfounded charge. We are classed with levellers and regicides, blasphemers of God, and revilers of kings,—madly bent upon the destruction of regular government,—ready to become plunderers of the property of others,—and secretly endeavouring to bring upon our country all those evils which have desolated a neighbouring nation. Good God! to what will not religious bigotry impel men! How does it either darken or destroy the understanding, or sanction the most gross and palpable falsehoods? Have Unitarians then alone no interest in the peace and prosperity of their country? Have they no property to lose? Have they not among their number, manufacturers and merchants of the first name and credit, whose whole substance depends upon the preservation of public tranquillity and subordination; and who have, therefore, as powerful motives to support the constitution of this country, as any one who sits upon the Episcopal bench? In our sentiments concerning the person of Christ, what is there which necessarily leads us to adopt political opinions, or to engage in political practices, hostile to the peace and welfare of our country?—In any other article of our religious faith, what is there that perverts our understanding, and corrupts our hearts, so much as to cause us to prefer violence, tumult, and rapine, to the enjoyment of personal liberty and security, and the unmolested possession of our property? Nothing surely in the eyes of the sober-minded and candid. No article in our religious faith produces that depravity which rejoices in the sufferings attending all political convulsions; nor

nor are we of that needy class which subsists upon the spoils of others. They who have avowed principles at all tending to anarchy, have been neither Unitarians nor Churchmen;—they have been persons of no religion,—persons removed from the influence of that doctrine, which breathes good will to all, and instructs us to live peaceably with all men.

We may have had intemperate men amongst us, and their language may, in many instances, have been misapplied and misunderstood; so it has happened to other religious denominations". We may have had, and still may have amongst us those, who, in their closets, have conceived that the most perfect theoretical form of government is the Republican:—the Church of England has, in her own bosom, persons of exactly the same description. The sentiments of the majority are not to be taken from these; nor can it be decided from the speculative principles, even of such persons, what their political conduct, when tried, would prove. It is certainly possible to consider a Republic as the best form of a government, so far as theory is concerned; and yet
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" " We know we have had amongst us many bad and weak men, who have often spoken and often acted wrong; but it is unfair to involve the innocent in the ways of the guilty. By this *ordeal*, the virtues and good qualities of every society upon earth would be utterly done away." Berrington's State, &c. p. 156.

It is remarkable, that differing so much as we do from Roman Catholics, there should be many passages in this ingenious work, which, *mutatis mutandis*, most aptly describe our character and conduct. Such is the sentence immediately following that which I have just quoted. " As Christians, we admit all the doctrines of Divine revelation; as *Unitarians*, we submit our faith to the authority (not indeed of any particular church, but) of Scripture; as men, we profess our obedience to the moral precepts of reason and nature; and as subjects, the king has our allegiance; the laws our reverence, and the state may command our services." Ibid.

to be very sincere friends, and steady supporters of a limited monarchy, which meets the approbation of the majority, and is productive of happiness and security to those who live under it. But whatever may be the speculations of a few individuals amongst them, as a body, I feel no hesitation in asserting, they are firmly attached to that form of government under which this nation has been so long prosperous and happy. And should occasion require it, notwithstanding the unjust suspicions of many of their countrymen, they will be found as ready as any other class of the community in giving it effect, and in warding off the evils of anarchy and levelling principles. Protestant Dissenters have served their country in times of great necessity and danger, and all denominations of them are ready to serve it again¹². Whatever the uncandid may say to the contrary, I am well assured that they are not the persons who would invite an enemy to destroy the liberties of Englishmen, or assist the invader in the execution of his nefarious purposes. They will defend, when called to it, that government which their ancestors contributed so greatly to establish, and under which, though they do not enjoy all the privileges they desire, nor all to which they think themselves entitled, they

¹² "Had it not been for Dissenters, I question whether we should now have had either this Constitution, this King, or this (the Protestant) Religion." So says the Author of the Independent Whig;—and they who will be at the pains of examining the history of this country, during the close of the last, and the greatest part of the present century, will find this assertion supported by facts. If the reader prefer the voice of reason to that of calumny, and desire additional testimony to the loyalty of Dissenters, he will do well to consult a very able vindication of their conduct and political character, written, it is said, by Mr. Serjeant Heywood, entitled "High Church Politics;" and published soon after the riots at Birmingham.

they do yet enjoy enough to attach them to its interests.

The sentiments they entertain concerning the nature of the Christian Church, can have no effect whatever upon their political principles and conduct. In separating the Ecclesiastical from the Civil Constitution, they do no more than others, not Unitarians, have done also; and whatever they may think of the former, to the latter they are firmly attached. Although they regard the alliance between Church and State as unscriptural, and unfriendly to the true interests of the Gospel, the Constitution, consisting of King, Lords, and Commons, may, and does appear to them wise and beneficial.

Such, my friends, is the defence we honestly set up; and in the judgment of the impartial, it will no doubt have its due weight. Upon the minds of those who are predetermined to condemn us, who are resolved to have none of that "charity which is kind,—which doth not behave itself unseemly,—which thinketh no evil; neither this nor any other attempt to justify ourselves, can produce the desired effect. In regard to such persons, we must pray, "that it would please God to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and turn to their hearts," while we console ourselves with the testimony of a good conscience.

I shall conclude with a few brief practical remarks:

First, The subject we have been considering, should teach us candour in our judgment of others. We complain, with justice, of the want of this Christian virtue in those who judge us. Hence

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it is, that we are treated with so much harshness, and held up as objects of terror;—hence it is, that principles are ascribed to us which we do not maintain, and that to those which we do profess, effects are attributed which they do not produce. Let not such be our conduct. Let us remember that men are what they are, in consequence of the circumstances in which they have been placed by Divine Providence, and that, had we been exposed to the same influences, our faith and our practice would have been the same. The effects of education, early associations, and the various connexions of social life, are exceedingly powerful; few are found capable of resisting them, and to these the majority owe all their opinions, and the conduct they adopt. Our education has been different from that of others, and our connexions have led in a contrary direction;—we, as well as they, are the creatures of circumstances;—and therefore, if we judge, should judge with that candour and impartiality which we wish to be shown to ourselves¹³. Truth is, in every respect, preferable to error; yet we see, that with regard to the general conduct of life, it does not cause that difference which we should at first apprehend. The most erroneous creed is frequently professed by the most worthy of men,

¹³ “As different practical duties are required of different persons, according to their circumstances and situations in life; so different degrees and different sorts of faith, if I may so express myself, may be required of different persons, according to their understandings, attainments, and opportunities of improvement; and God only knows what allowance is to be made for the influence of education and habit, and for that infinite variety of tempers, dispositions, and capacities, which we observe in mankind.” *Elements of Christian Theology*, by the Bp. of Lincoln, Vol. II. p. 222.

men, and the doctrine which, speculatively considered, threatens to destroy every principle that is excellent in human nature is often adorned with every Christian virtue, and all the graces of piety. This, though it be no recommendation of error, should influence our judgment of others, and enforce the practice of that virtue, candour, which is doubly binding upon us, as reasonable in itself, and enjoined by our Great Master.

Secondly, This subject should also teach us not to be conformed to the world. We are not of the world. The world will not own us,—she casts us out as unworthy, and fears lest she be contaminated by our intercourse. We have much greater reason to fear for ourselves; and it is a subject for congratulation, that our duty is thus made necessary, and our best interests most effectually served by our greatest enemy. If the words of Scripture be true, the world is that enemy; and if the advice of an Apostle be worth obeying, that to the world we be not conformed, we may be thankful for every hindrance to conformity which is thrown in our way. It would be pleasant, indeed, to be judged with less harshness; to enjoy that esteem which we have not justly forfeited; but, if the world will cast out our name as evil, let us turn this to our advantage and improvement. The first Christians were treated in a similar manner, and they rose above the world, and escaped its polluting influences. In many respects we profess to follow their example, let us endeavour to do so in this. There will ever be something in the character of the world hostile to the spirit of the Gospel;—there will ever be something injurious to him who desires to be a true follower

of Jesus Christ. Its principles and practices are, and ever will be, at variance with those which Christianity requires, and can never be adopted by those who are sincere in the profession of the Gospel. We are reproached, my friends, (and if the reproach be just, it is the severest that can be cast upon us) with being too much conformed to the world. I fear that in this respect we are not wholly without blame. Have we not too generally the same pursuits, and do we not display the same eagerness in them? Are we not lovers of wealth, of honour, and of power, and sometimes little scrupulous in the means we use to obtain them? Do not the follies and trifles of a dissipated age engage too much of our attention and zeal? Even now, in this eventful and awful period, when the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, and the enlightened and feeling mind starts from the contemplation of impending calamity—Are not the rich amongst us still proud—they who have the means of luxury still luxurious—and few, in any rank of life, exhibiting that temper and conduct, which the peculiar nature of the present times requires?—Professors of genuine Christianity, it should not be thus!—The world should have little of our affection—it deserves but little—and our principles teach us to give it ^{no} more than it it deserves. Our thoughts and our affections should be fixed upon higher and nobler objects—our treasure is in heaven—there let our hearts be.

Thirdly, and lastly, In defence of our principles, argument is not wanting: let us then endeavour to aid the force of argument by a constant course of virtuous and upright conduct; in that let the excellence

cellence of our faith be seen and acknowledged. As we profess a purer creed than others, our life should be more distinguished by its purity. Men will ever suspect the soundness of our principles, if our behaviour, which will be justly supposed to be influenced by them, be not such as the Gospel approves. Let the bigotted and uncharitable find nothing to condemn in our faith, but its hostility to error, superstition, and hypocrisy, and its tendency to enlighten and enlarge the human understanding. What says our Lord? "A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.—Wherefore by their fruits shall ye know them." Approving, then, the things which are excellent—let us strive to be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

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NOTE.—See Page 18.

IT is possible that some of my readers may require proof of these assertions, and as I have not an opportunity of consulting foreign Missals, &c. I shall content myself, and I have no doubt satisfy them, with some extracts from the writings of English Catholics, and the Devotional Works used in this country. In regard to doctrine and worship, I believe there is little difference between English and foreign Catholics, except that the former have it not in their power to be equally magnificent, nor to indulge in those pompous, but childish processions, which are designed “to arrest the attention, and seize upon the imagination of the people” abroad.

Mr. Berrington, in his *State and Behaviour of English Catholics*, has given what he calls “A concise, but accurate Exposition of Catholic Belief.” I will select a few articles from it.

We profess to believe, he observes,

“That Christ has established a Church upon earth, and that this Church is that which holds communion with the See of Rome, being One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolical.

“That we are obliged to hear this Church, and therefore, that she is infallible, by the guidance of Almighty God, in her decisions regarding faith.

“That St. Peter, by Divine commission, was appointed head of this Church, under Christ its founder: and that the Pope, or Bishop of Rome, as successor to St. Peter, has always, and is at present, by divine right, head of this Church.

“That honour and veneration are due to the Angels of God and his Saints; that they offer up prayers to God for us; that it is good and profitable to have recourse to their intercession; and that the relics or earthly remains of God’s particular servants are to be held in respect.

“That by works done in the Spirit of Penance we can make satisfaction to God, for the temporal punishment which often remains due, after our sins by the Divine Goodness have been forgiven us.

“That Christ has left to his Church a power of granting indulgencies, that is, a relaxation from such temporal chastisement only as remains due after the Divine pardon of sin; and that the use of such indulgencies is profitable to sinners.

“That there is a Purgatory or Middle State; and that the souls of imperfect Christians therein detained are helped by the prayers of the faithful.

“That

“ That there are seven sacraments, all instituted by Christ; Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Order, Matrimony.

“ That in the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, *there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood together with the soul and the divinity* of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“ That in this Sacrament there is by the omnipotence of God, a conversion or change of the whole substance of the bread into the body of Christ, and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood; which change we call Transubstantiation.

“ That under either kind Christ is received whole and entire.

“ That in the Mass, or Sacrifice of the Altar, is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.

“ That in the Sacrament of Penance, the sins we fall into after baptism, are by the Divine mercy forgiven us.”

“ These are the great points (says Mr. B.) of Catholic Belief, by which we are distinguished from other Christian Societies; and these only are the real and essential tenets of our religion. We admit also the other grand articles of revealed and natural religion which the Gospel and the light of reason have manifested to us. *To these we submit as men and as Christians, and to the former as obedient children of the Catholic Church.*” Berrington’s State, &c. p. 143.

Extract from the “Abridgment of Christian Doctrine,” p. 31.

Q. What duty do the people owe to the Chief Pastor of the Church?

A. Considering his high station, we owe him the greatest respect and veneration; and considering his supreme authority, we owe an entire obedience to his decrees and orders in all things relating to religion.

Prayers selected from the Mass for the Dead.

“ O God, who are the giver of pardon and lover of man’s salvation, grant we beseech thee, of thy merciful clemency, that our fellow-brethren, kindred, and benefactors, who are departed this life, may, by the intercession of the ever blessed Virgin Mary, and all thy Saints, attain to the fellowship of everlasting happiness.

“ Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty and most-merciful God, that the souls of our brethren, relations, and benefactors, for which we have offered to thy Divine Majesty this sacrifice of praise, *being purified of all their sins by the virtue of this Sacrament*, may receive, thro’ thy mercy, the bliss of eternal light.”

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In the Litany of our Blessed Lady of Loretto; which it would be needless to give the reader entire, we meet with the following expressions:

“ We fly to thy patronage, O sacred Mother of God! despise not our prayers in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin.

“ Holy Mother of God,

“ Holy Virgin of Virgins,

“ Mother of Christ,

“ Mother of Divine Grace,

“ Mother of our Creator,

“ Vessel of Singular devotion,

“ Mystical Rose,

“ Gate of Heaven,

“ Refuge of Sinners, &c. &c. Pray for us.”

In the short Litany of the Blessed Virgin, she is styled, “ Daughter of the Eternal Father—Mother of the Eternal Son—Spouse of the Eternal Spirit—Tabernacle of the Glorious Trinity—Mother of the King of Heaven.”

In the Litany recommended to be said in Catholic Families every evening, Invocations are addressed to Mary, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael;—to all the Holy Angels and Archangels—all the Holy Order of Blessed Spirits—St. John Baptist—St. Joseph—all the Holy Patriarchs and Prophets—all the Apostles and Evangelists, each by name—St. Stephen, St. Cosmas, St. Protase—all Holy Martyrs—St. Sylvester, St. Jerome, &c.—all Holy Bishops and Confessors—all Holy Doctors—all Holy Priests and Levites—all Holy Monks and Hermits—St. Lucy—St. Catharine, &c.—and all Holy Virgins and Widows. These are intreated to make intercession for those who call upon them.

In a work published by Lady Lucy Herbert of Powis, are “ Motives to love and honour our Lady;” to which the reader may have recourse, if he wish to have further proof of the extravagant superstition which prevails with respect to Mary, the wife of Joseph of Nazareth. A short extract will perhaps suffice. “ She is the most beautiful work that ever came out of the Divine hands, being only less than God himself, and by a strict tie of blood with Jesus Christ, she enters into a degree almost divine, insomuch that he will have the concurrence of her prayers, together with his own infinite merits, to be the immediate cause of effectually obtaining our salvation.” p. 59.

Devout Addresses to the five Wounds of our Saviour.

To the Wound of the Left Foot.—“ My Lord Jesus Christ, I humbly adore the most sacred wound of your left foot; I render you thanks for that cruel pain suffered with so great love and charity,” &c.

To the wound of the Right Foot.—“ My Lord Jesus Christ, I humbly adore the most sacred wound of your right foot; I render you thanks for that cruel pain,” &c. &c.

The Wound of each Hand is addressed in similar language.

To the wound in his sacred Side.—“ My Lord Jesus Christ, I humbly adore the most sacred wound in your blessed side, rendering thanks for the immense love manifested towards us at the opening of your inflamed heart; I feelingly condole the affront, and the excessive grief of your most afflicted Mother. Grant me pure love and perfect charity, that loving you above all things, and all things in you, my miserable soul, by the assistance of your holy grace, may be worthy to breathe out in the sacred wound of your blessed side,” &c. *Bona Mors.* p. 25.

The Devotion to the sacred Heart of Jesus is not universally practised among Roman Catholics. It originated with the Jesuits, and from the first has been zealously, and, I believe, successfully recommended in this country. A very few extracts from the “ Devotion and Office of the sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ,” will show the reader the nature of this superstition.

In the Litany of the sacred Heart, p. 114. we meet with these expressions.

“ Heart of Jesus!

“ Heart of Jesus, Sanctuary of the Divinity!

“ Heart of Jesus, Tabernacle of the most Holy Trinity!

“ Heart of Jesus, Throne of Mercy.

“ Heart of Jesus, Refuge of Sinners, &c. &c. &c. have mercy on us!”

Aspirations to the Heart of Jesus, to be made every day at nine o'clock in the morning and four in the evening.

“ O most sacred Heart of Jesus! have mercy on us.

“ Blessed be the most adorable heart of Jesus my God for ever and ever.

“ O may thy adorable heart be for ever praised, and all thanks, both in time and eternity paid to it,” &c. *Ib.* p. 120.

“ O adorable heart of my amiable Jesus! I adore thee with the most profound homage I am capable of,” &c. *Ib.* p. 160.

“ Most amiable heart, beloved object of our tender affections! may all honour, glory, love, and benediction, be ever given to thee.

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Be thou our comfort in adversity, our guide in prosperity, our safety in dangers, and protection against all our enemies, visible and invisible. Amen." *Ib.* p. 164.

In the Rules, &c. it is recommended that no day should pass without some offering or prayer in honour of this adorable heart. *Ib.* p. 166.

Nearly the same devotion is paid to the heart of Mary. See p. 188, &c.

In the same work is a Litany addressed to St. Joseph, and another to St. Francis Xavierius; in which the latter is called "Light of the Blind—Curer of the Lame—Health of the Sick—Life of the Dead—whose power the sea and tempests obey—whose command the sea and all elements reverence."

It will be needless to add more from this impious work. The reader, if he desire it, may consult Mr. Archdeacon Blackburne's "Considerations on the present state of the Controversy between the Protestants and Papists," &c. p. 129. or the Devotion and Office itself.—Enough, I hope, has been produced to justify the representation given of the principles of Roman Catholics in this Discourse.

THE END.

In the Press,

AND SHORTLY WILL BE PUBLISHED,

By the same AUTHOR,

DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES,

FOR THE USE OF

YOUNG PERSONS.

AND
DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES
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